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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

MIDDLE EASTSituation Report Number 36
(As of 1700 EDT)THE MILITARY SITUATIONGENERAL

1. Significant action shifted to the Sinai today as the Egyptians launched a major offensive along their entire front. Action was concentrated in the southern sector, with the Israelis reportedly inflicting heavy armor losses on the Egyptians. By late afternoon, Tel Aviv claimed that fighting had almost ceased as the Egyptians were forced to withdraw.

2. On the Syrian front, the Israelis claimed few advances, and the situation is basically unchanged. The Syrians and Iraqis launched local counterattacks but reportedly were repulsed. The Jordanian brigade has yet to see action, while a Saudi brigade is approaching the Syrian border.

EGYPTIAN FRONT

3. On the Egyptian front there was a day of intense ground and air activity, with a minor naval engagement noted in the Mediterranean near Alexandria. The Israelis reported that they had pushed back the Egyptian advance on all sectors. Particularly heavy fighting apparently took place in the Mitla Pass area. According to unfirmed press reports, the Israelis are moving additional troops into the Sinai front area.

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4. Claims of losses were conflicting. The Israelis report over 200 Egyptian tanks destroyed and over 400 enemy troops captured. According to Egyptian announcements, about 150 Israeli tanks and 24 aircraft were destroyed. Egypt further stated that "new areas of land along the entire confrontation line" had been seized.

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SYRIAN FRONT

6. There is no major change in the situation along the Syrian front. According to the Israelis, the lead elements of their forces advancing toward Damascus have halted in the vicinity of Sasa, where artillery duels were under way. Shelling of the suburbs of Damascus continues. Israeli forces attempting to envelop Syrian and Iraqi units on the south flank of the main advance have also stopped near Harra. Small unit counterattacks by Syrian and Iraqi forces throughout the day have been repulsed according to the Israelis. Syrian air activity was light during the course of the day.

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SOVIET POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

13. The US embassy in Moscow reports that on 10 October Novosti correspondent Ted Rukhadze asked Hedrick Smith of The New York Times whether it would not be a good idea for the US and USSR to agree to limit arms shipments to the Middle East in order to contain the conflict. Rukhadze remarked that the arms limitation agreement was his own idea and did not suggest that his comments be passed to the US. (Smith adds that it was an associate of Rukhadze's who had hinted that the Moscow summit meeting of 1972 would take place despite the US mining of Haiphong harbor.) The US embassy states that it has received no suggestions from official or unofficial Soviet sources which would indicate an arms limitation agreement is under consideration. The

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press channel would not be an altogether unlikely channel for the Soviets to float a trial balloon of this type; there are ample precedents, particularly during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962.

SAUDI ARABIA

14. A senior Jordanian official reported yesterday that the Saudi Arabian brigade enroute to Syria passed through Azraq in north-central Jordan yesterday and was expected to reach H-5 on the old Iraqi pipeline by sunrise this morning. This progress report would put the brigade far from the Syrian front with difficult terrain still to cross. Radio broadcasts from Riyadh today announcing the arrival of the Saudi brigade at the "Golan Heights front" thus appear somewhat premature.

LIBYA

15. Libya is moving elements of the 3rd Mechanized Infantry Brigade to Tobruk, the largest Libyan city near the Egyptian border. Although it is still not clear whether these units will proceed to Egypt,

JORDAN

16. Yesterday's tension preceding and following the announcement of Jordan's troop commitment to Syria has been replaced by relative calm in Amman, according to the US embassy. The Jordanians are satisfied with the war news but mindful of their vulnerability now that Jordan is more deeply committed. Amman airport remains closed but the Syrian border and the bridges to the West Bank are open. The embassy cites the open bridges as evidence that the commitment of troops to Syria is still to be regarded more as a gesture than a casus belli. The price of all Arab currencies is up, especially the Syrian pound. Gasoline is now under the government's control and yesterday's food hoarding has further depleted retail stocks. The press continues to repeat stories of US re-supply of weapons to Israel but there have been no editorial attacks on the US.

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17. Prime Minister Rifai said privately today that if King Husayn and Jordan are to have any credibility in the Arab world after the present conflict, it is absolutely imperative that the Jordanian army become actively involved. He said Jordan "needs martyrs," pointing out that Jordanian non-involvement while Syrian and Iraqi forces were taking casualties served no political purpose. He said he was going to urge the King to commit the 40th brigade to actual fighting, and predicted that it would be in active counter-offensive operations by tonight. When asked if other brigades would go in to assist the 40th if it were badly cut up, Rifai replied in the negative, saying Jordan had only promised to furnish one brigade and needed the remaining units to defend Jordan against possible Israeli attack. This is only one man's opinion; the informal council of war on which the King relies to help make decisions could go either way, depending on the mood of the moment.

SYRIA

18. Despite reports that Damascus is "under siege" with artillery fire and heavy air attacks hitting the outskirts, the city is described as "surprisingly" normal. The population is still calm, crowds are mingling, and shops are open. The diplomatic community is not yet preparing to evacuate. The Italian Embassy, however, reports that it is finding it increasingly difficult to carry out its function of protecting US interests not only because of the deteriorating security situation but also because of heightened anti-US feeling generated by reports of US participation in combat alongside the Israelis.

PAKISTAN

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NIGERIA

23. General Gowon of Nigeria is reconsidering his country's relations with Israel. In separate conversations with the US and Israeli ambassadors, Gowon strongly indicated he will sever diplomatic ties with Tel Aviv if Israel begins a major offensive on the Suez front, or if Israel bombs civilian targets in Egypt. Gowon appealed to the US not to resupply Israel with arms. Pressures on Gowon from within his own government to break relations have been reinforced by the gathering momentum of the African break-with-Israel movement. Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon have now severed ties, bringing to five the number of African states to take such action since the outbreak of war. A break by Nigeria will intensify the pressure on other African states to follow suit. Gowon wields considerable influence, both because of his personal stature and

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his position as the current chairman of the OAU, of which Egypt is a member.

UGANDA

24. President Amin is now in Baghdad for talks with the Iraqi president, according to the local press. The next stop on his self-appointed round of talks is to be Amman.

OIL MEETING

25. According to the Arab press, the Kuwaiti government has announced that the emergency session of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) called for early last week will convene in Kuwait on Tuesday.

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